

SAINT LOUIS BIRD CLUB BULLETIN

Official Organ of The Saint Louis bird club
for the Promotion of
Bird Enjoyment, Bird Study and Bird Conservation

Vol. 2

February 8, 1933

Number 2

CONTENTS

Bird Club Program	Page 5
Dues	5
Notes from the President	5
Field Observations	5, 8
Editorial	6
Club Program for March?	6
Otto Widmann Column	7
Personals	7, 8
"Splitbeak" Number 282368	8
The Efficient Barn Owl	8

BIRD CLUB PROGRAM

THE NEXT MEETING OF OUR CLUB
WILL BE HELD February 15, 1933, at
Cabanne Library, 8 p.m. Miss Lillie
R. Ernst will speak on "Our Winter
Birds." Miss Ernst has long been a
careful student of birds and for
some time past has made almost daily
bird trips afield her chief element
of recreation.

TIME TO PAY DUES

Dues should be paid in January for
the calendar year. If they were not
paid then, they should be paid now, to
Miss Cousland or to Mr. Moser, without
waiting for the Club to spend 3% of
the dues as postage on the notice.
Members paying \$10.00 for Life Member-
ship are exempt from Annual Dues.

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CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE PRESIDENT

A letter to the National Audubon
Society from Mrs. Albright of the Na-
tional Parks Service reveals assurance
of protection to the White Pelican
within Yellowstone Park and all other
Parks.

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In response to a request from Mrs.
A. L. Wheeler, Mooresville, Indiana, a
member of the Executive Committee of

the Indiana Audubon Society, informa-
tion relative to the European Tree
Sparrow was sent, and a reply included
thanks for the assistance and a com-
plimentary copy of the Indiana Audubon
Society Year Book for 1932. Mrs.
Wheeler believes she is seeing this
bird in her vicinity and promises fur-
ther news about it.

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From a Mrs. Brown, of Brockton,
Massachusetts, comes a note enclosing
a copy of the year's program laid out
by the Brockton Audubon Society, like-
wise a few comments on winter bird
life in this area - about 18 miles
south of Boston. Tree Sparrows and
Quail are plentiful, - a flock of 20-25
Quail on one day and "an unusually
large flock" on another day. Mrs.
Brown offers exciting news about the
Lone Heath Hen of Martha's Vineyard:
he was seen towards the close of De-
cember at West Tisbury on the Vine-
yard.

R. L. Hobbs.

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FIELD OBSERVATIONS

Conway Road, between Lindbergh Hi-
way and Olive Road, St. Louis Co., Mo.
(A likely spot for winter birds.)
Jan. 3, 1933. Bluebirds, a small flock;
Redwings, 3; Chickadees, Cardinals
and Juncos, numerous; Red-bellied
Woodpecker, 1; Nuthatch (heard); Caro-
lina Wren, 2; Crow, a rookery; Mocking-
bird, 1; Grackle, a small flock; Tree
Sparrow, several.

St. Albans, Mo.

Jan. 9. Kingfisher, 1; Shrike, 1.

St. Louis Co., Clayton Road, west.

Feb. 2. Meadowlarks, several.

Clayton, Mo., North and South Rd.

Jan. 31-Feb. 2. Robins appearing daily.

Webster Groves, Mo.

Jan. 20. One Robin and one Mockingbird

February 8, 1933

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EDITORIAL

THE HAWK, THE MOST MALIGNED OF OUR BIRDS, was well presented and defended at our last meeting by Dr. R. J. Terry and will be further defended by him in Bill which he is drafting for presentation in the present session of the Legislature at Jefferson City. This led to the mention of the Barn Owl, a sketch of which appears on another page. Henderson, in "The Practical Value of Birds," summarizes the economic records of numerous investigators and crystalizes the reputation of the bird. These are selected instances: The analyses of 200 pellets revealed skulls of 225 meadow mice, 2 pine mice, 179 house mice, 20 rats, 6 jumping mice, 20 shrews, 1 mole, 1 Vesper Sparrow. (Fisher, Yearbook U.S.D.A., 1894, 223-224.) In 675 pellets there were 1,789 mammals (1,119 meadow mice), 36 birds, 2 frogs. (Beale, Yearbook U.S.D.A. for 1900, 301.) Watson has estimated that each pair, while feeding young, captures 40 mice daily; Newman says each owl of this species is worth 5 pounds annually to the British Nation. (Lantz, U.S. Biological Survey, Bul. 31, 46-47, 1907.) Mr. Barmeier's statement may therefore be too conservative.

Returning to the matter of a protective law. Warren F. Eaton, Upper Montclair, New Jersey, furnishes in-

Page 6

teresting statistics on the mortality of banded hawks and owls in "Bird-Banding, January, 1933. Protected raptors suffered a recorded 4.4 per cent mortality in 2,001 individuals banded; unprotected raptors (Accipiters and Great Horned Owls) suffered a recorded mortality of 11.2 per cent in 456 individuals banded; raptors which should be but are not generally protected (Marsh Hawk, 4 Buteos, 2 Rough-legs, 3 Falcons (except Sparrow Hawk), 2 Eagles), a recorded mortality of 12.1 per cent in 1050 banded. Thus it appears that the mere legislative Act cuts down the mortality very substantially, saving approximately 2 out of 3. Let us secure protective legislation in Missouri for our hawks and owls as quickly as possible. The National Association of Audubon Societies will cooperate with us, and probably the American Ornithologists' Union has machinery which might be brought into action. Ed.

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Biographical Memoir of Robert Ridgway, 1850-1929, by Alexander Wetmore, in Biographical Memoirs, XV, Nat. Acad. Sci., 1932, 55-101, is cited by Dr. T. C. Stephens, in the Wilson Bulletin, Dec. 1932, 244, as next to the sketch by Harry Harris and surprisingly interesting.

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THE CLUB PROGRAM FOR MARCH

The Executive Committee as such may not have determined that this shall be the March program, but it is under favorable consideration at this time. Whether it is or not, let us assemble all possible information on the European tree Sparrow, the bird singled out last spring for the summer's special study; and the Redheaded Woodpecker, the number and the haunts of which species were selected for objective work this winter. If the reports are made the program of the Club for March, the reports may be represented in the April Bulletin. If they are not wanted for program, perhaps we may use the information in the March Bulletin. Let us do justice to each project bird.

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On January 20 we had a great surprise going to Riverside at the end of Olive Road. We were prepared to meet some Blackbirds on account of the unusually mild weather, but to find a cloud of them as large as we ever meet in fall or spring was a thrilling experience. Unfortunately the cloud was half a mile east of the road, too far away to be sure of the species, whether Redwings or Starkings, but from the perfection of their manoeuvre we must infer that they belonged to the same kind. They flew close together, turned sharply, came down for a moment and rose again all together like one body. Besides the birds making the cloud, there were hundreds of Blackbirds alongside the road, in the fields and in the farmyard feeding undisturbed. They were so hungry that we had time to observe them carefully and found they belonged to three different species, Bronzed Grackles, Rusties and Redwings, all males except a few. The interesting observation was that the Redwings belonged to the subspecies *astragelus*, called the Giant Redwing by Oberholser. They are really not new to us in Mo., as we collected a few on January 28, 1918, verified by Oberholser. They are one inch longer than our usual form.

Monday, January 23, was a busy day for our bird student. A Flicker was seen on Horton Place; the first Robin visited my home at Enright at 11.30a.m.; in Forest Park a party of six Bluebirds was near the lagoon and a troop of Bronzed Grackles was busily feeding near the Art Museum; there were 6 Crows courting, also 2 Blue Jays; in Hampton Park 3 Robins were apparently on the nesting grounds, together with a pair of Downies and a big troop of Juncos and another troop of Juncos in Brentmoor.

Tuesday, January 24, gave us the pleasure of meeting the first Shrike of the season in Mount Lebanon. Sparrow Hawks were seen whenever we went into the County, and Blue Jays are seen and heard in all suburban places, showing themselves even at 5105 Enright.

O. Widmann.

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The following informative letter written by Mr. Widmann on Feb. 8, 1918 accompanied the specimens of Giant Redwings he sent to Dr. Oberholser for determination, the specimens proving to be as surmised;

"I take the liberty of sending you by parcel post for identification the skins of 2 Redwings, which I think belong to your subspecies *Astragelus*, the Arctic Redwing, since they are so much larger than our summer residents that one can easily tell the difference in the field. They were taken Jan. 28; they have been here all winter, remaining during the coldest part of this unusually severe winter. A flock of about 1,000 frequented the shores of the Missouri River, where they spend the nights on the ground in the *Equisetum* and visit fields and pastures in day time. A fine male was shown me Feb. 22, '18 by H. S. Iadd who took it at Meramec Highlands out of a small flock. W O. Widmann.

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PERSONALS

A press article states that Robert W. Barrell, a member of our Club and a one-time Vice-President, donated a collection of bird specimens, representing about 200 species, to the St. Louis Educational Museum. It is said that most of these specimens were collected some forty years ago and maintained in excellent condition, - the workmanship of one of Mr. Barrell's sisters. The article states that Mr. Barrell donated also a collection of birds' eggs.

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Tom Kirksey drove to Florida for a three-weeks' visit, leaving January 3 and returning January 29. He made over-night stops at Nashville and Atlanta, arriving at Miami on January 7, spending one day and two nights at Atlanta. While at Miami, he attended a meeting of the Florida Nature Study Society, in memory of the late Florida Naturalist, Dr. Charles T. Simpson. He gave considerable time to the study of the birds in the Everglades. Returning, he made over-night stops at Dade City, near the Bok Bird Sanctuary

February 8, 1933

and at Quincy, Florida, Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, New Orleans, Louisiana, and Durant, Mississippi. He will report his bird observations after he is even with his classes in school work.

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Miss Alice Hymers, a longtime member of our Bird Club, sends her copy of the Bulletin to her friend, Mrs. Rose Wheeler, Mooresville, Indiana, an Executive Committee member of the Indiana Audubon Society, and states that Mrs. Wheeler expects to visit St. Louis some time in the spring. She has expressed a strong desire to see specimens of the European Tree Sparrow.

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Through the efforts of Miss Cousland, members of the Bird Club may purchase their copies of Forbush's Portraits of New England Birds- \$1.75- at Mrs. Gerhard's Book Shelf in the Bishop Tuttle Memorial Building, 1210 Locust Street, St. Louis.

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FIELD OBSERVATIONS (con.)
feeding in close proximity in yard next door: the Mockingbird made several threatening "passes" at the Robin, which the latter met with a momentary lift of its wings and body, settling down again instantly.

Jan. 21. Bluebird song heard.

Jan. 22. Robins, 15, S. Rockhill Road.

Jan. 28. Perched on a far corner of the neighbor's garage, huddled low to the shingles, one Bob White: a male bird: flew in a dead line across the yard to an open field in a few moments. The first observed in this immediate vicinity this season.

Jan. 29. Far up in an oak, one Meadowlark giving out a querulous "chee-ee-ee-ee."

Jan. 31-Feb. 2, Robins, S. Rockhill Road

Feb. 3 Brown Creeper, 1 in yard.

The European Tree Sparrow pair pays frequent visits to the oak from which hangs last year's wren house in which they (?) built, and reared a brood. Lately the birds have stuffed even more feathers, sticks and grasses into an already crowded house.

I am not seeing Redheaded Woodpeckers at all. R, L, Hobbs, Feb. 5.

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Page 8

"SPLITBEAK" NUMBER 282368

This afternoon, February 5, we had a call from "Splitbeak". Two inches of snow on the ground and Temp. 26°. "Splitbeak" is a Cardinal friend of ours, banded 2.25p.m., April 16, 1932. Her measurements were: Total length, 7 15/16"; wing, 3.75; beak, 1 1/16; beak and crest, 2 1/8; tail, 3 13/16; tarsus, 1; iris, Mummy Brown. The left side of her upper mandible was split and was healed but with the split portion overhanging the lower mandible. Thereafter she came into our traps 51 times during April-July, 1932, and not again until today. She lost her tail between 6.30p.m., April 21 and 4.30p.m. April 23, and 9 Cardinal tail feathers supposed to be hers were found between these dates under a Spirea bush by the front porch. On May 13, "Splitbeak" had a new tail 2.25" long. On July 8, the outer half of tail was squarely broken off. Today the plumage is fine but the longest tail feathers on the right side are 3/8" shorter than those on the left side. Weight, May 13, 41.78gr.; May 18, 44.2; May 22, 42.36; June 8, 52.1; June 14, 43; June 29, 41; February 5, 1933, 49.5gr. E.A.S. in cooperation with the Biological Survey.



Mr. Harry Barmeier, U. S. Game Protector, says to a farmer who has shot a Barn Owl: "You have dumped a bushel of mice into your granary!"